

# IDAHO BARLEY NEWSBRIEF

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IBC sets barley research priorities

ARS releases food barley varieties

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**Idaho barley check-off dollars at work... New barley varieties released by ARS Aberdeen** - ARS

barley breeder Don Obert has released two new food barleys with higher levels of beta-glucan fiber content which should have future application as a human food ingredient.

These varieties include:

**HGB 101** (03AH3054-51)- waxy hulless variety with beta-glucan fiber content of 9.9% and average yield of 67 bu/Ac.

**HGB 102** (03AH6561-94)- waxy hulless variety with beta-glucan fiber content of 6.8% and average yield of 78.4 bu/Ac.

## IBC sets 2010-11 barley research priorities

The Idaho Barley Commission held its annual barley research review with University of Idaho and ARS scientists on March 2 on the CSI campus in Twin Falls. Current research projects were reviewed and new proposals were considered for funding in Fiscal Year 2011, which begins July 1.

**The IBC board set a preliminary research project budget of \$45,510**, with several projects still under consideration. This compares with a total research project funding of \$95,306 in the current year, which includes one-time cost-share funds of \$15,000 to support current operations at the University of Idaho's Tetonia R & E Center. Without industry funds from barley and potato growers, the UI had proposed terminating the Tetonia R & E Center operations last December.

### Approved FY 2011 research projects include:

- ✦ ARS malting and food barley breeding - \$26,000
- ✦ UI barley extension nurseries in 8 locations - \$10,810
- ✦ UI cost-share support scientist to maintain north ID nurseries - \$5,285
- ✦ UI winter malt barley herbicide tolerance evaluations - \$2,415 (this project will be expanded to include testing locations in both North and South Idaho)
- ✦ UI cost-share of pest status and IPM adoption survey - \$1,000

### Proposals still under consideration include:

- ✦ Winter food barley breeding at Oregon State University- funded at \$19,000 in current year.
- ✦ Mutation breeding for herbicide resistance in barley at Washington State University - funded at \$5,000 in current year.
- ✦ **Future cost-share funding support for the UI Tetonia R&E Center** - IBC's future involvement at Tetonia depends on the outcome of a strategic review that will be conducted this spring with the UI, potato and barley industries.

## **Policy Watch—2012 Farm Bill debate about to begin - provided by National Barley Growers Association lobbyist Dale Thorenson, Washington, D.C.**

U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) has publicly announced that he his Agriculture Committee will begin hearings on the next farm bill this month. Noting that many feel this is rather early – “we barely understand the 2008 Farm Bill!” – the Chairman remarked to one farm group recently that “you won’t start thinking about what we need to do in the next bill until I put you on the spot, and so... I’m going to begin having hearings on it.”

There are pressing reasons for this head start - rising federal budget deficits. Ten years of “deficits don’t matter” have suddenly shifted into “we need to slash government spending because we are going broke.” And so the Chairman wants agriculture to be prepared for the probable budget reconciliation process that may take place in 2011 to address the ballooning National debt, assuming the tender shoots of our current fledgling economic recovery are strong enough by then to be weaned from the stimulative effects of excessive federal outlays.

**Timetable** - the 2008 farm bill expires on September 30, 2012. Hearings through the next year, followed by Committee mark-ups in 2011, would put the legislation on track for completion the following September. And yes, it will take that long, because the process will not be easy. Also complicating the effort will be the fact that 2012 is a presidential election year.

To be frank, the U.S. does have a very serious debt problem. Chairman Peterson is concerned that budget hawks seeking places to cut will find fertile hunting grounds with the \$49 billion in Direct Payments that are projected by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) over the next 10 years under current law. And these budget hawks will be bi-partisan in nature, and hail primarily from urban/suburban congressional districts. Chairman Peterson noted, “We can sell helping farmers when incomes are down, but it gets a lot tougher when prices are high and times are good.”

It is true that Agriculture can claim that the “farm” portion of the farm bill – crop/dairy supports, conservation, and crop insurance – is less than ½ of 1% of the entire federal budget and therefore insignificant, but the national debt has reached a point that all segments of the budget will likely be called upon to make cuts. Farm groups should examine carefully the 10 year March 2010 CBO projections for farm program outlays to determine if there might be a better way to spend these dollars with the recognition that being proactive in recommending “reform” is always preferable to being on the receiving end of someone else’s idea of “reform.”

**Farm Bill Field Hearing will be held May 1 at 1 pm on the NNU campus in Nampa, hosted by Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson and Idaho Congressman Walt Minnick.** Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA) President Scott Brown of Soda Springs will testify on behalf of Idaho grain barley and wheat producers at this hearing.

## Farm Bill debate begins - continued from page 2

For instance, is an income risk management regime – perhaps the combination of an enhanced county triggered ACRE program coupled with a robust crop insurance program – preferable to Direct Payments? Should SURE (the standing disaster program through the 2011 crop year) be included to augment this risk management basket? Would diverting Direct Payment spending to pay for these other programs save the farm bill baseline from the circling budget hawks? If agriculture decides to stay the course and hold fast to Direct Payments, will the hawks be vanquished? Is there another way to achieve the goals of keeping a viable sized farm in place during an economic downturn in Ag? If changes are made, how are the differing regional needs of U.S. agriculture reconciled? And would these changes be WTO compliant?

These are difficult questions, and are representative of the conversations that are now beginning to take place. And Chairman Peterson has served notice that it is time to suit up, because the **2012 Farm Bill game is about to begin.**



### More policy action from Washington, D.C...

- ✦ **Ethanol on the front burner** - U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) introduced legislation earlier this month to extend the ethanol tax credits and ethanol tariff through 2015, citing the need to continue investing in domestic renewable fuels while lowering the U.S. dependency on foreign oil. The GREEN Jobs Act of 2010 will extend the current 45 cents per gallon blenders tax credit and 10 cent per gallon small ethanol producer producer's tax credit for five years and the \$1.01 per gallon cellulosic producer tax credit for three years. **EPA action expected on E-15% petition** - Meanwhile, EPA is expected to rule on a petition filed by Growth Energy last year to raise the acceptable blend level for ethanol in gasoline from 10% up to 15%. At the current blending rate of 10% we are rapidly approaching what is known as the blending wall or the point where we have absorbed as much ethanol as we can with stagnant gasoline demand. **More than 13 billion gallons of ethanol will be produced this year, from more than 4.3 billion bushels of corn.**
- ✦ **Rail Shipper Day pushes passage of rail reform legislation** - Idaho grain growers Wayne Hurst, Burley, and Robert Blair, Kendrick, will participate in a rail shipper day on Capitol Hill on May 5th to advocate for passage of the S. 2889, the Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2009, which passed the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee unanimously last December. Key provisions of S. 2889 that will benefit captive rail shippers which include most grain elevators across Idaho:
  - ◇ Require major carriers to quote bottleneck rates and terminal switching rates;
  - ◇ Reduction of paper barriers;
  - ◇ Reduced filing fees for shippers to bring rate complaints to the STB;
  - ◇ Allow STB's simplified rate dispute methods to be used by more shippers and to allow certain larger cases to be resolved through arbitration; and
  - ◇ More STB oversight over rail mergers and acquisitions.